

SEYCHELLES.

Report of the Department of Agriculture for the
year ended 31st December, 1941.

the third year, this report is presented in an abridged form, in compliance with instructions received from the Colonial Office.

SECTION I. AGRICULTURE IN THE COLONY.

METEOROLOGY.

Weather conditions.— A rainfall of 96.02 inches was registered at the Port Office during 1941; this is slightly less than the average for the past twenty years. The rainfall was distributed throughout the year and resulted in ideal growing conditions.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES.

In Coconuts.— The quantity of copra exported during the year was 3,929 tons, but this is considerably less than that produced as shipping difficulties caused large stocks to be held in the Colony until 1942.

The value of copra exported this year was Rs. 418,020 compared with Rs. 540,411 for the 4,680 tons exported in 1940.

The average selling price of copra for the first eight months of 1941 was approximately Rs. 100 per ton. The price of copra started to rise during the month of September and it advanced to Rs. 145 per ton at the end of the year.

Increases in the yields of nuts were recorded on some estates but decreases were recorded from others which had suffered from drought in previous years and attacks of the coconut beetle.

The predators which were mentioned in previous reports as having been introduced have effectively controlled the scale insects attacking coconuts.

2. *Essential Oils.*— The following table gives quantities and values of essential oils exported during 19

	Quantity.	Value.
Cinnamon leaf oil	Kilos. 72,855½	Rs. 319,7
Patchouli oil	„ 2,498½	„ 86,3
Peppermint oil	„ 95	„ 1,20

Cinnamon leaf oil.— The quantity of oil exported year was about 18 tons less than the record total exported during 1940. Most of the oil was sold in the United States America where the demand was good.

The local price of oil was Rs. 3.85 per kilo. in the month of January. The price rose to Rs. 5.35 per kilo. for a time during the month of July and at the end of the year remained steady at about Rs. 4.85 per kilo.

Patchouli Oil.— There was a steady demand for the oil during the year and the local price varied from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 per kilo.

The export of oil was about fifty per cent higher than that of 1940. Suitable weather favoured the extension of the area under this crop.

Planters continue to use the Central Distillery for processing their Patchouli leaves.

Central Distillery.— The following table gives quantities of material distilled and the number of hours the still worked during the year :—

Material.	Quantity.	No. of hours
Patchouli	tons 10.2	969
Palmarosa	„ 0.3	9
Eucalyptus citriodora	„ 2.7	38
Eucalyptus staigeriana	„ 1.7	45
Cinnamon leaves	„ 169.5	2,948
Cinnamon bark	„ 29.9	818

3. *Vanilla.*— The quantity of vanilla exported during the year was 258 kilos. valued at Rs. 7,872 compared with 412 kilos. valued at Rs. 89,565 exported during 1940. The local price was Rs. 25 to Rs. 28 per kilo. when the crop was brought to market. The crop for 1942 will also be small as few flowers have been produced. The area under this crop is being further extended.

4. *Food Production.* — The increase in the cultivation of food crops which was recorded last year has not been further extended. This is principally due to renewed interest in the cultivation of Patchouli, the price of which increased steadily from Rs. 8 per kilo. in 1939 to Rs. 32 in 1941. Weather conditions during the year was also favourable for the cultivation of Patchouli which competes with food crops both for labour and space. The shortage of tobacco and increased vanilla prices also resulted in more interest being paid to these cash crops which to a lesser extent limited food production.

The scheme, which was started on Government estates last year, for the intensive growing of staple foods has progressed satisfactorily. The area under food crops now is approximately 106 acres, 28 of which have been cultivated by labourers and peasants.

Plantains and Bananas. As there is always a ready sale for this produce the Department has further increased the area under Plantains and Bananas which is now about 22 acres. Experience has shown that the St. Jacques variety grows better on sandy plateaux than the Malgache variety. The holes should be filled gradually to prevent the plants from riding too quickly to the surface. The planting of bull-heads or base of stems is to be recommended in practically all soil types in Mahé, especially in sandy plateaux where successful propagation by sword suckers is usually dependent on the weather.

Sweet Potatoes. The local varieties 'Cambar', 'Botanic' and 'Payet' have so far given good results in plateaux areas. Apical cuttings should be used whenever they can be obtained.

Cassava. About 17 acres of both bitter and sweet cassava have been planted on the Government estates, principally on hill sides where it is grown on contour ridges to demonstrate the proper methods of cultivation.

Yams. The propagation of Lisbon yams introduced from the West Indies last year is proceeding satisfactorily. A yield at the rate of ten tons per acre was obtained from one of the Department's experiment plots. About 3 acres of this crop have been planted on the Government estates and free distribution of planting material has also started.

Vegetables. The heavy rains and late arrival of seeds somewhat handicapped vegetable gardening. The Department had a trial at Cabbage growing at Foret Noire estate. The results were most promising and several hundred cabbages were sold from the estate.

SECTION II. WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT.

1. *Estates under departmental control.* — The Grand'A estates were worked as a commercial undertaking and a report on the working of these estates will be published in the Government Gazette when the accounts will have been completed. At the end of the year about 106 acres had been cleared and planted with food crops by the Department and small holders.

2. *Reafforestation.* — The weather has been more favourable to reafforestation work this year especially at Praslin where the drought of the past few years somewhat retarded operations. At Midlands the planting of quick growing species of *Cassia* and other hardy types was carried out chiefly on the poorer slopes. Trees in the valleys have grown so well as to require no attention for the time being. The removal of undergrowth and dead palm leaves in the reserves has been continued as a measure to control fires. A considerable number of coco-de-mer nuts has also been planted.

In Mahé selective cropping of cinnamon has been continued at Morne Blanc, the upper parts of Casse Dent and in other areas where planting had recently been done. This practice gives a good start to the young plants which would otherwise be smothered by cinnamon bushes.

A considerable area has also been cleared of *Gleichenia* fern on the Eastern slopes of the recently acquired Val Ric property. Clearing is being followed closely by planting.

3. *Botanical and Town Gardens and experimental plots.* The Gardens were maintained in good order and the experimental plots were chiefly used for propagating economic and food crops.

4. *Livestock.* — The distribution of Rhode Island B eggs has been maintained. The Department has also been able to increase its flock and several cocks have been distributed for breeding purposes. It is generally felt that the pure-bred birds require more attention than the local types, but the crosses are becoming increasingly popular and are giving good results as dual purpose birds.

Several pigs from Anse Boileau were slaughtered and sold at the Victoria market this year. Pure-bred boars were lent to farmers in the out-districts and service at the Botanical Gardens and Anse Boileau was continued. Applications for weaners are numerous and the Department has not been able to cope with all orders on hand.

The Department's aim in building up a Freisian X Scind herd is progressing satisfactorily and a number of young heifers is now being raised.

The introduction of 2 male and 8 female goats of the napari breed was made possible with the kind assistance of the Civil Veterinary Services, Lucknow. The animals arrived safely with the exception of one buck which died in transit. They are now being kept for a period of six months at the Quarantine Station, Long Island.

5. *Laboratory and distillation investigations.*—Forty-nine samples of essential oils were analysed before exportation and twenty-five samples of fermentations were analysed for the Police Department. Experimental distillations were carried out on essential oils and rum.

6. *Agricultural Instruction.*—Training was given to two pupils. Officers visited estates and visits to Government plantations were arranged for planters.

7. *Fisheries.*—The following table shows the quantity of land and fishery products exported from the Colony during the year:—

	Guano	Tons	18,498
Fishery products:—	Salt fish	Kilos.	275
	Shark fins	"	1,555
	Trepangs	"	3,141
	Turtle oil	"	1,116

SECTION III.

OMITTED.

SECTION IV. SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION AFFECTING AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES.

Ordinance No. 11 amends the Cultivation of Sugar Cane, the Manufacture and Sale of Bacca Ordinance No. 22 of 1937 so that licensees shall be required to keep their bacca registers on licensed premises.

Ordinance No. 12 was made to levy a tax in the form of an export duty on certain kinds of produce to be exported from the Colony.

A. F. NICHOLS,
Director.

Department of Agriculture,
Seychelles, 30th April, 1942.

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 Agricultural Laboratories.—Farming was given to five
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 and fishery products exported from the Colony during

Guano	Tons	18408
Sea fish	Ribbs	275
Sharp fins	"	1,000
Trepangs	"	8,110
Turtle oil	"	1,110

SECTION III.

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A. F. NICHOLS
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